



Bermuda Botanical Society

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MAY NEWSLETTER 2022

FROM THE PRESIDENT:

It is with sadness that in the past few months the BBS saw the passing of two longstanding members – Nell Johnston and Christine Watlington – whose love of plants and botany shone through their work – Nell, particularly, as an incredibly knowledgeable BBG Tour Guide and Christine, BBS Executive Member, with her beautiful, engaging artwork.

It has been a busy few weeks with a variety of interesting, informative and enjoyable events. Nigel and Diana kindly opened their amazing garden to us yet again – a wonderful mix of gardens ranging through fruit trees, vegetables, flowering borders and of course the restored endemic/native area. The BBS is grateful to have benefitted from donations made following visits there. Thank you Nigel and Diana and Rod and Martha Ferguson for their very generous donations.

The children's Easter Activity – with art work by Christine – was very popular and through which the BBS gained several junior and one adult member. Tree Tales series 2 continues to attract attention. Work on Tree Tales 3, the Palm Collection, has begun and the team is indebted to George Ogden and his wife Sandra for spending time with us to identify the palms and check our labelling. Thank you, George and Sandra. Lisa led a delightful South Shore Dunes walk, it was lovely to see children very engaged.



Junior Volunteers: the BBS has two young student volunteers who are photographing and researching plants at the BBG.

Endemic/Native Area – the plants are well established. Of particular note now flowering are the Bermudiana, *Sisyrinchium bermudiana*, including the rarer white Bermudiana, the St Andrew's Cross, *Hypericum hypericoides* and the Jamaica Dogwood, *Dodonaea viscosa*. Many thanks to the Taskforce Team. Would love to have some more volunteers! The Memorial Planter was also replanted.

cont.

"To encourage and support the study and promotion of the botanical sciences within Bermuda"

Under the very capable direction of Government Landscape Architect, Danny Simmons, the **Botanical Gardens Steering Committee**, which has BBS representatives, meet regularly to build a framework and action plan for the BBG. A **Friends of the Bermuda Botanical Gardens** group has also been formed and if anyone would like to be part of this group you would be very welcome. Email bdabotanicalsociety@gmail.com subject line FBBG. A recent visit to BBG took place to assess what has happened since an initial tour, and progress is very encouraging. There was also plenty of discussion and suggestions put forward.

Your suggestions and thoughts on articles, events, etc are always welcome, please stay in touch.

Jennifer Flood

Request for Native and Endemic Seed Collection

By Gary Taylor, M.F.C.

To support the restoration of Bermuda's natural plant communities, it is not enough to remove invasive species and replace them with native and endemic saplings and young plants. After a few hundred years of occupation by human-introduced invasive plants, our soils have changed from what our native plants had been accustomed to for tens of thousands of years. The depletion of the soil seed banks is one way in which Bermuda's soils have been sadly altered in this time of invasion.

A soil seed bank is the naturally accumulated seeds of plants in the leaf litter and soil of a terrestrial area. Under non-invasion circumstances this seed bank provides the means of regeneration of native and endemic plants that are lost by death from 'old age' or disease or from natural disasters like hurricanes, fires, and droughts. Some seeds sprout in the shade of existing plants, patiently waiting for their chance to reach for the sun. Other seeds can remain dormant in the soil and will sprout when they feel the warmth of the sun provided by the loss of canopy cover overhead. The seeds of many plant species can sit dormant in the soil for decades.

Without this accumulation of native and endemic Bermuda seeds our beloved plants lose an advantage to invasive species when they need every advantage they can get. After so many years of invasive plant dominance in most natural areas of the island, the seeds of the invasives far outnumber the seeds of our natives in the soil seed bank. Then, when we put in the exhaustive effort to remove invasive plants and replace them with natives and endemics, the first seedlings to sprout in the newly cleared ground come from the still invasive-dominant soil seed bank. They are the 'early birds,' so to speak, that have the advantage of starting the fight for resources. Add to that their incredible growth rates which far outpace those of most of our natives and you have the perfect formula for continued invasive plant species dominance.

It would be nearly impossible to remove the unwanted seeds from the soil. What we can do that might help is to gently mix in the seeds of our precious native and endemic Bermuda plants. If we can start rebuilding our native soil seed bank when we plant to restore, then maybe we can start gaining ground (pun intended) in our war against invasive plant species here in Bermuda.

cont.

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The BBS would like to ask our Bermuda resident Society members to start collecting the seeds of native and endemic plants to be used in our restoration efforts. The seeds will be collected by the Society at a future date when proper storage can be secured. Please remember to label and record the names of the plant and the date and location of collection. Be as specific as possible with the location in case identification confirmation is needed. All interested parties please coordinate with Gary Taylor, neworleansgary@gmail.com, to ensure that not everyone is collecting the same type of seed.

Note: Do not collect from Nature Reserves or Parks, and get permission to collect from privately owned land if it is not your own.

WHAT'S IN A NAME? BÄRLAUCH in botany and other disciplines

George Peterich

The great Carl von Linné must have said: 'You don't know a plant if you don't know the name'. In other words: knowledge about a plant begins with the name. I would like to take this a step further: If you find out why a plant has a name, a whole world of knowledge opens for you.



Here is an example: Someone gave me a bottle of mustard that came from Germany. on the label it said *Senf mit Bärlauch*. In English that is *Mustard with Wild Garlic*

The word garlic is composed of two parts: GAR, which is old English for spear and LIC, from old English Leac, which is the same as Leek, or Lauch in German. The spear refers to the pointed shape of the leaves

But why did the Bärlauch got its name in German?

Looking on the Internet I found out that it is because of an old superstition that bears would eat it. I am sure that it is not because of any superstition, but it has come down to us by actual observation in ancient times. The plants appear early in the spring and would be among the first things bears would eat when they came out of hibernation.

Another note about language: In Dutch the plant is called *Daslook*, where *look* is of course the same as Lauch or leek. But *das* is badger in English. It is fun to think that perhaps the origin of that name comes from a different observation.

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South Shore Dunes Walk, April 24, 2022

Marlie Powell - text and photos

On a perfectly beautiful, sunny Sunday afternoon, Lisa Greene handily kept 15 of us fascinated with the astonishing variety of plants along the South Shore beaches.

Starting at Warwick Long Bay, plenty of succulents such as Bay Lavender and Beach Naupaka abound. The Naupaka self-seeds and proliferates, likely transported from a coastal hotel garden.



Heading west, we saw the Tassel plant. Juliette was interested in the tiny flowers and aptly named tassel-like bunches of leaves.



We saw Spanish Bayonet, Seaside Morning Glory, Lobelia, Prickly Pears, Maidenhair Ferns, native Passionflower, Tamarisk and Lantana.



L to R: Spanish Bayonet, Seaside Morning Glory, Beach Lobelia, & Maidenhair fern

Barbados gooseberry (*Pereskia aculeata*) - a cactus with leaves!

Pereskia is one of only a few genera of cacti that have true leaves. The fruit are edible and best when made into jam.



Photos: L. Greene

“To encourage and support the study and promotion of the botanical sciences within Bermuda”

In memoriam Nell Johnston, M.B.E.

Nell Johnston was a force of nature and was a long-standing supporter of the Botanical Society and the Botanical Gardens in particular. Many years ago, when a course to become a tour guide was offered, Nell was the first in line!

She went on to give tours in the Gardens for 35+ years, bringing her love of plants and Bermuda, along with her knowledge of plant uses, to her tours, teaching and delighting countless people - visitors and locals alike!

Nell was always on hand to help with events and giving talks and demonstrations on plants uses, plant weaving and the like. Nell was a treasure and will be sorely missed by the staff at the Gardens and fellow Society members.



In memoriam Christine Watlington



Christine Watlington came to Bermuda in the mid 1970s. She had trained at Kew Gardens and was fascinated by the variety of plants on the island. She took her sketchbook and started recording what she saw. This led to her book "Bermuda's Botanical Wonderland". It was published in 1996, and Christine came to sign books for the Botanical Society at the Visitor Centre in the Botanical Garden. It has been a source of information and inspiration for plant lovers here.

Christine has always been involved with botany and has kept painting. Starting May 20, Masterworks will show Christine's recent works and her formidable series of botanical paintings of the ferns in Bermuda. The show will be only for three weeks.

Always a great supporter of the Bermuda Botanical Society, Christine served on the committee for a number of years. We have lost a very knowledgeable and talented person, and a loveable friend.

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Tour of Bermuda Audubon Society's Sears Cave Nature Reserve

Sunday, March 6, 2022

Marlie Powell - text and photos

This is certainly one of the least well-known natural wonders in Bermuda!

Sears Cave is a huge limestone sinkhole filled with lush fern growth including some rare specimens such as the Governor Laffan's Fern. When the roof of the cave collapsed long ago, a steep-sided sinkhole was formed providing the perfect environment for ferns to thrive.

Sears Cave is tucked in behind St. Marks Church in a small patch of carefully controlled unspoilt woodland secured by a high, padlocked chain link fence and obscured by a dense thicket of shrubs and trees. Within the enclosure, one gets the sense of stepping back in time, when the only sounds are those of swaying branches and delightful birdsong.

Alison Copeland provided detailed information and examples of native, endemic, and invasive species of ferns. We were able to view Governor Laffan Ferns growing on the floor of the cave. These ferns have proven to be extremely difficult to grow in other locations and are considered to be nearly extinct.



L – R: Gov. Laffan on floor of cave, Up close , Variety of fern specimens & Alison explaining

The Chudleigh's Garden - a sampler:

The expansive garden included edible, native and endemic, medicinal, economic and ornamental plantings, all intermixed, to be explored and enjoyed along meandering paths. Wonderful!



L to R: a bountiful papaw, Bermuda cedar with sea oxeye, aloe, cochineal cactus and a salt marsh oxeye sucker.
Photos L. Greene

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TRIVIUM NO. 38 - FOSSILS

George Peterich

In his book about bees, Thor Hansen writes that he was polishing pieces of amber, to see if there would be any fossil bees inside. The smell of resin filled the room and he tried to imagine walking around in pine forests that existed 44 million years ago.

I have often tried to imagine the landscape where a fern grew, that made an impression in the mud some 350 million years ago. This piece of rock comes from the Rocky Mountains in Alberta, Canada. It is about a foot long and there is another fern-imprint on the other side.



Future events:

May 20th Official Opening – June 14th

BERMUDA'S BOTANICAL WORLD - an exhibition to celebrate the life and work of Christine Watlington will be held at Masterworks. BBS members are encouraged to attend.

May 22nd

ASSESSING THE EXTINCTION RISK OF BERMUDA'S ENDEMIC PLANTS - A very timely event as this is also the International Day for Biological Diversity. (<https://www.un.org/en/observances/biological-diversity-day>) More details in the poster below. Please email bdabotanicalsociety@gmail.com to reserve your space. Subject line: Extinction

Assessing the extinction risk of Bermuda's endemic plants

Presentation by Alison Copeland
for

The Bermuda Botanical Society,
in celebration of the International Day for Biological Diversity

Sunday, May 22nd 2022

At Horticultural Hall, the Bermuda Botanical Gardens
at 2:00pm

The 1 hour slideshow presentation will be followed by a short walk to the Botanical Society's endemic plant flowerbed in the Botanical Gardens.



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Italian Chickpea Salad

Vegan, Gluten-Free, Wheat-free, Nut-free ~ Choose local organic ingredients for best results

4 servings, Prep & Cooking Time = 15 minutes

Ingredients: 4 tbsp olive oil	400g can chickpeas, drained
1 clove garlic, crushed	6 sundried tomatoes in oil, slice
2 tbsp capers, drained and chopped	2 celery stalks, sliced thinly
1 tbsp parsley, finely chopped	2 tbsp celery leaves, chopped
½ tsp dried red chillies, crushed	50g pitted black olives sliced
1 lemon, grated rind and juice	50g mixed green salad leaves

Method:

1. Heat the oil in a small pan, adding the garlic, capers, parsley, chillies, and grated lemon rind. Sauté for 2 minutes.
2. Place the chickpeas, sundried tomatoes, celery, celery leaves and olive oil in a bowl. Pour the garlic mixture and 1 tbsp lemon juice over them.
3. Arrange the salad leaves in a serving bowl and add the chickpea salad.

This quick and easy salad is a good source of protein and packed with flavour.



Contributed by Marlie & Jocelyn Powell, Vegan/Vegetarian chefs at Kingston House B&B
KingstonHouse@BBBermuda.com

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Children's Corner

Flying into Spring!!



Jocelyn Morrison

Bay grape leaf Spring Bird Picture

What you will need:

One piece of large white card
A small piece of card
One large bay grape leaf
Two small bay grape leaves
White glue
Markers and crayons
Scissors
Hole punch
One piece of ribbon

What you need to do:

1. Place the large leaf on the larger card for your bird's body. Then place the two smaller leaves for the wings on either side. You can move them around until you have the shape of bird you like.
2. Glue the large leaf first then the smaller leaves where you want your wings to be.
3. While the leaves are drying take the small piece of card and draw 2 ovals for the bird's eyes. Make circles on the ovals with a black marker or crayon.
4. Draw and cut out a long diamond shape from the card. This will be the beak. Colour one side yellow and the other red. Fold the corners over to make a triangle.
5. Place the eyes on the large leaf and glue in place.
Then carefully put glue onto one half of the yellow side only. Glue this in place. You may need to hold the glued part on until it sticks. This makes the bird's beak look open ready for food or to sing.
6. You might need to use a glue gun for a stronger bond.
Ask a grown-up to help, as a glue gun becomes burning hot!!!
7. Draw feet under your bird or use two small pieces of twig and glue in place.
8. When your bird is dry punch two holes at the top of the card and thread the ribbon through, tie and hang on your wall.

If you want to make a **blue** bird or a **red** bird, colour your leaves blue or red before gluing the eyes and beak in place.

Tip: Bay grape leaves are great for drawing on especially when a bit dried out!!
Have fun! See what else you can make with bay grape leaves.

We'd love to see your art work so please send a photo to bdabotanicalsociety@gmail.com



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